

SECRET [REDACTED]

27 August 1971

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Briefings of Senator Stennis re Agency Operations in Laos

1. Senator Stennis attended meetings of Agency Subcommittees where our Laos operations were discussed on one or more occasions each year from 1961 through 1970. However, he did not register particular interest in this subject until 1969, when Senator Russell's health began to fail and our Laos operations came under mounting Senate criticism.

25X1A 2. Following the Cooper amendment of September 1969 (designed to restrict the use of U.S. troops in Laos and Thailand), Stennis requested a detailed briefing on Agency involvements in these areas, and on 19 September [REDACTED] and Maury met with him and Ed Braswell. [REDACTED] covered the history of our Laos operations in detail, and Stennis and Braswell asked a number of questions and took extensive notes. 25X1A

3. The following week Stennis attended a meeting of the Agency Subcommittee where Laos was discussed.

25X1 4. In February 1970 Stennis was present at a meeting of Agency Senate Subcommittees where the Laos situation was again reviewed, and on 7 July 1970 [REDACTED] and Maury brought Stennis and Braswell up-to-date on the Southeast Asian situation, including Laos, in a private briefing requested by Stennis.

5. On 29 July 1970 Colonel White and John Clarke briefed Stennis and Braswell on the Agency budget. The Senator had requested the briefing in preparation for the impending debates on the military procurement authorization bill, and the history and funding of our Laos operations were covered in detail.

25X1A 6. On 2 October 1970 the Director and Maury met with Stennis and Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard during which the Agency's operations in Cambodia and Laos were reviewed in detail. Recalling his colloquy with Senator Fulbright at the time the Fulbright amendment was being debated, Stennis said he felt that our operations involving the Meo guerrillas, and our use of [REDACTED] could be justified so long as no new activities were undertaken.

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7. On 16 November 1970 the Director discussed with Stennis the Fulbright amendment and its possible impact on our programs in Laos. The Director, who had just previously discussed the same problem with Senator Russell, reported that neither Stennis nor Russell had found any problems with our programs in northern Laos and our interdiction operations in southern Laos.

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8. On 4 June 1971 [REDACTED] and Maury accompanied the Director in a meeting with Stennis and Braswell at which the Senator expressed concern that, at the upcoming Senate secret session on Laos, it might be contended that the Senate had not been kept properly informed regarding Agency activities there. The Director pointed out that, in fact, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as well as the Agency Subcommittees had been kept fully informed, and we provided the Senator with a blind memorandum setting forth the facts (see attached).

9. On 7 June 1971, in response to an urgent request in behalf of Stennis, we provided Braswell, in addition to the above mentioned summary, the following:

a. Summaries of the Director's testimony regarding Laos before the Foreign Relations Committee on 23 January 1968, 28 October 1969, and 23 March 1971.

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b. A blind memorandum describing the [REDACTED] in Laos.

c. A breakdown of Agency funds being spent in Laos for the years 1961-1971 inclusive.

10. On 11 June 1971 Stennis attended a briefing of the Intelligence Subcommittee of Senate Appropriations at which the Director reported on the status of our Laos operations.

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11. On 14 July 1971 Colonel White and John Clarke briefed Stennis and Senator Margaret Chase Smith on the Agency's budget, and particularly on the situation of the [REDACTED]

12. At a meeting with the Director on 20 July 1971 Stennis spoke in confidence of his growing concern about the Agency's involvement in Laos and what he might do about it.

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13. In conversation with the Director on 6 August 1971, Stennis expressed concern over our Laos involvements and the attention they were getting in the Senate. He remarked that the recent appearance of Secretary Laird and Ambassadors Johnson and Godley temporarily relieved the pressure, but this would not last long.

14. On 20 August 1971 Stennis discussed with the Director the possibility of an upcoming secret Senate debate on Laos and requested backup material for use in this connection. He was particularly interested in the statutory or constitutional authority for the Agency's paramilitary program, and in the history of our briefings of Senate committees and subcommittees on our Laos operations.

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